

## Andrew Jackson to Graves W. Steele, November 7, 1829, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO GRAVES W. STEELE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Draft.

Washington, November 7, 1829.

That an overseer is accountable to his employer *for all losses sustained through his neglect*, and I do assure you, I would not if I could, make you answerable for any thing else. Nor can you believe that I am very suspicious, when you take into view the great losses in stock and negroes I have lost since I left my plantation under your charge and management. Therefore you see the necessity of forwarding to me agreeable to your obligation, and instructions, a full account of your guardianship with the loss of my property, and with the cause that has lead to it.

I have been truly astonished to hear my beacon was nearly gone, this to me was unaccountable, because I stood by and saw a large Supply as usual for my White and Black family salted in my smoke house. In your Statement I have asked you to forward, I shall expect you to furnish me with an explanation how this has happened. There can be no mistake in the quantity, for I took it down as weighed. I have wrote you before to advise me whether we would have a sufficient supply of Pork for the plantation for the next year—my son informs me, he is very doubtful whether you will raise a sufficient supply of Pork. It will surely be an evidence of bad management, if such a stock as I left, will not support the plantation and if that turns out to be the fact, the sooner I break it up, the better must it be, for my interest.

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I have been advised by some not to continue you, by others to try you another year. The latter I have concluded to do, as I am aware the injury it would be to you to leave the business under present rumors. But when I say I have concluded to retain you another year, it is on the express conditions that you treat my negroes with humanity, and attention when sick; and not work them too hard, when well—that you feed and cloath them *well*, and that you *carefully attend to my stock* of all kinds, and particularly to my mares and colts, and see that they are well taken care of and the colts kept in good growing order, and the mares in good condition to raise and suckle their colts. This I have a right to expect from you for the wages I give you. I have been offered here a first rate overseer for \$350 pr year. I have been offered in Tennessee a well experienced, and well recommended overseer, for four hundred dollars. I give you five hundred which is equal to \$1000 when cotton was at 14 cents pr pound. I engaged to give you this liberal wages because I had confidence in your honesty, your industry, your care and vigilance, over my stock and every other matter belonging to my business and farm. I gave it to you, because I expected you would treat my negroes with that humanity and care, that you by your articles was bound to do, and I now engage you again, because I believe what property, if any that has been lost for want of proper care, that you, as an honest man, will truly report, and pay for, and that another year you will in all things, strictly comply with your engagements in every respect. I shall expect to receive your answer to every part of this letter in all respects on its receipt and shew to all that my confidence in you was not misplaced

I am very respectfully yrs

P S. send me the amount of the cotton picked out and the probable amount you will make this crop